

CULTURAL BROKERS, FORMS OF HYBRIDITY AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL COMPARATIVE LITERARY JOURNAL

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Abstract The research on the first international journal of comparative literary studies has usually foregrounded only one of the founders of the *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universalium*, namely Hugo von Meltzl. This Romantically biased image of the sole founding father suppressed all the research questions regarding the extremely large and complex network of collaborators. The focus on the scholarly pool of wide geographic, cultural and ethnic variety of 120 collaborators could reframe our basic questions regarding the emergence and transnational transmission of early institutional comparative literary knowledge, but it would also lead to a more focused analysis on the way networking and various types of transnational networks produced diverse forms and notions of comparative literature. This paper investigates only one type of cluster/network and its consequences within the first international journal of comparative literary studies; it focuses on the role of ethnic and cultural hybridity, and its impact on imagining transnationality and comparative literature in the ACLU.

Keywords comparative literature, *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universalium*, hybridity, Hugo von Meltzl, Sámuel Brassai, Anton Herrmann / Herrmann Antal, Ludwig August Staufe-Simiginowicz, Heinrich von Włislocki / Włislocki Henrik

The historical perception of the *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universalium* has always been trapped in an ethnically biased Romantic image of the founding father. There is much sense and truth in underlining the paramount importance of Hugo von Meltzl / Meltzl Hugó in establishing the first international journal of comparative literary studies, but the emphasis that foregrounded him as the quasi-isolated and misunderstood genius also forged a mythology around him and his work as a proto-comparatist. This mythology suggested, at least, two main hidden narratives. On the one hand, it often envisioned a virtuous and

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excentric scholar returning from his Western European studies to an underdeveloped Eastern Europe, where his only chance of a true academic career and rebellion against alleged parochialism was the founding of a transnational review. This narrative of the solitary genius and rebel fails to explain a series of circumstances, from the teamwork of Meltzl with the cofounder and codirector of the ACLU, Sámuel Brassai, to the enthrallingly large and complex network of collaborators, but also those gestures when the community of the ACLU defined itself against the canonic “Western” standards of literary studies of their times.

On the other hand, this type of story of one of the founding institutions of modern literary comparative scholarship implied a hidden agenda of ethnicity and identity that often governed the framework in which the ACLU could be presented. For instance, Hugo von Meltzl / Meltzl Hugó himself seemed to embody the (returning) ‘Western European’, “the German” in the easternmost parts of Europe, even though his regional Saxon Transylvanian identity used to affront and shock the German nationalist readers of that time. Even the scholarly spelling of his name is suggestive of this hidden agenda; in spite of his diverse uses of his own name in more or less formal contexts (Hugo von Meltzl, Hugo Meltzl, Hugo Meltzl von Lomnitz, and especially Meltzl Hugo / Meltzl Hugó) that shaped his German-Hungarian bilingualism, the invariable use of the German version in the secondary literature suggests an alleged homogenous ethnic identity. The same situation recurs also on another level, when the collaborators of the ACLU, or the languages and literatures implied, are discussed. Using essentialist ethnic metaphors, the ACLU is fairly often referred to as the meeting point of ethnically clear-cut cultures, languages, as if the review had been the scenery of indissoluble ethnic and national identities where the “Hungarians” met the “Chinese”, the “Japanese” came to meet the “Icelanders”, and “the German” language met “the Albanian” one, and all the involved parts would have remained unchanged after these contacts. That is why this meeting point rarely becomes a melting pot in analyses of the ACLU phenomenon; while we speak of so many people, languages and cultures involved in this literary interaction, we seldom conceive it as a situation that must have reshaped identities, including national and ethnic ones, since it involved so many transactions and negotiations with and on languages and cultures.

It is along the same hidden agenda that the members of the large network of collaborators of the ACLU are discussed in essentialist ethnic terms; if Meltzl is ‘the German’, then Brassai is “the Hungarian”, Dora d’Istria is “the Romanian”, “the Greek”, or “the Albanian”, Emilio Teza is “the Italian”, E. D. Butler “the Englishman”. Things may turn into an even more complicated essentialist ethnic “doublespeak”. For instance, Herrmann Antal, an excellent collaborator of the review, is usually regarded as a Hungarian ethnographer in Hungarian scholarly circles. The same scholarly figure becomes Anton Herrmann in the German scholarly environment. Due to his valuable and numerous German-language publications, his “Germanness” is taken for granted, just as his “Hungarianness” in a Hungarian scholarly context; methodological nationalism seems to govern the construction of an ethnically biased angle that discusses his figure and contribution depending on the language and ethnic group he is associated with.

This methodological nationalism, that reinvented and sometimes enforced ethnic and national boundaries even where they had not been before, or where ethnicity meant

something completely different, hid the peculiar character of a large cluster of collaborators of the first international journal for comparative literary studies. Many of these collaborators hardly had the alleged clear-cut, inflexible ethnic and cultural identities a hidden and unreflexive ethnic and cultural essentialism used to attach to the network of scholars around the ACLU. The hybrid character of the collaborators is far from being an issue of minor importance; it urges us to ask questions regarding the immense and enthralling hybridity potential of the whole review itself. The ACLU has always been famed in the scholarly world for being attracted to border situations, cultural encounters, textual intersections. I suggest that many of these should be recontextualized and reinterpreted as manifestations of moments and forms of a peculiar identity politics that reveals the omnipresence of hybrid cultural and ethnical identities, and the attraction to a similar identity politics in the self-fashioning of the pioneering journal of comparative literary studies. This may shed a new light not only on this peculiar cluster of collaborators, but also on many of the collaborative gestures of these literates and scholars. Such an analysis will also be able to foreground some of the entangled connections between the hybridity of some of the key figures behind the review and the ceaseless methodological attraction of the ACLU towards cross-cultural transactions, fluid cultural frameworks and hybrid literary texts.

1. Foundational hybridity: Hugo von Meltzl / Meltzl Hugó

The presence of hybrid identities in the ACLU is really at the core of the identity politics of the ACLU, since from its beginnings it reimagined the literary discipline along contacts, interactions, fluidities and mutual exchanges. The review shocked some of its contemporaries by blurring the borders of national literatures and denying their self-dependence. For instance, Meltzl himself often spoke about the narrow nationalistic vision of German literary history that overstated its alleged purity, and erased the ceaseless contacts and interminglings that had most of its master-pieces, including the *Nibelungenlied*, emerge. The ACLU preferred what we could call cultural brokerage in a multitude of instances.. Was this a mere incident? Was it a series of sheer, idiosyncretic preferences of ideas without any broader significance or reason? Why and how did many of the actors around the ACLU agree in the importance of hybridity and cultural border crossing in matters of literature and literary communication?

My thesis is that this common attraction towards hybrid literary situations, communicational forms, genres, textualities and scholarly identity politics of some of the key figures of this founding scholarly institution is strongly linked to the cultural hybridity of their own identities. Here and in what follows I shall argue that the strong attachment to cultural and ethnic hybridity of the ACLU acquires a wholly new meaning when viewed from the perspective of the hybrid cultural identities of the founders and of some of the collaborators.

The methodological nationalism¹ that attributed ethnic or national terms² even to the hybrid figures and narratives in the history of the ACLU has been most visible in the way one of

¹ Important contributions to the topic: Sándor Kerekes, *Lomnitz Meltzl Hugó 1846–1908* (Budapest, 1937); György Gaál, ed., *Összehasonlító Irodalomtörténelmi Lapok* (Kolozsvár / Cluj-Napoca: Kriterion); Berczik Árpád, “Lés débuts hongrois d l’histoire littéraire comparée”, *Acta Litteraria Academiae*

the founders, namely Hugo von Meltzl was “overethnized”. Even though there are many tokens of the hybridization of his family and the hybrid elements of his lifestory, he was usually perceived as an ethnic German, studying and teaching German literature from the custom position of an ethnic German, and shaping the contours of the new discipline of comparative literature from this ethnic angle. But a closer inspection of the sources can lead us to a less known path, revealing the hidden story of a complex cultural identity behind the comparative literary project.

Even though Hugo von Meltzl came from a Transylvanian Saxon family of Szászrégen (in Hungarian) / Sächsisch Regen (in German) / Reghin (in Romanian), the family was clearly exposed to a sociolinguistically complex environment of several languages, including Hungarian. Moreover, the father being the land registrar of the town, he seems to have planned the career of his sons along two core historical patterns available for Transylvanian Saxons at the midst of the nineteenth century in ethnically and linguistically mixed communities. On the one hand, there was the law of attraction of the important local Saxon administrative and scholarly centre of Herrmannstadt (Sibiu / Szeben, today in Romania) that was able to act as a strong catalyst and a reproductive environment of the Transylvanian Saxon community within the Hungarian part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. This career and identity path was clearly chosen for and by the elder son of the Meltzl family. Oskar von Meltzl graduated the Academy of Law in Herrmannstadt, and embarked on a fairly typical leading local administrative and scholarly Transylvanian Saxon career; step by step, he became professor of political economy, political leader and even an MP, editor of the *Siebenbürgisch-Deutschen Tageblattes* and a well-known scholar in matters of economy and administrative sciences.

Meanwhile, Hugo, the younger son, seems to have been advised and to have taken a different identity and career path when choosing the Unitarian College, a Hungarian Protestant scholarly community of Kolozsvár / Klausenburg / Cluj that had pioneered in introducing Hungarian language in education a few decades earlier. In 1872 he returned to the not-long-before founded University of Kolozsvár, the second Hungarian university, and an institution with the exclusive use of the Hungarian language. Even though these choices are usually regarded as gestures of assimilation, Hugo von Meltzl often being thought of as a Saxon partly turned into Hungarian, the archival and published sources show an in-between situation that is best described by cultural brokerage and sometimes by cultural hybridity.

Of course, this in-betweenness, this fluctuation between two strong local cultures often proved to be an identity trap for Hugo von Meltzl / Meltzl Hugó. Although he spent long years

Scientiarum Hungaricae 2 (1959); Horst Fassel, ed., *Hugo Meltzl und die Anfänge der Komparatistik* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2005); David Damrosch, “Rebirth of a Discipline: The Global Origins of Comparative Studies,” *Comparative Critical Studies* 1–2 (2006): 99–112.

² For a deeper and larger analysis regarding the methodological nationalism and its consequences, see: Joep Leerssen, *National Thought in Europe: A Cultural History* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam U.P., 2006), Idem, “Viral Nationalism: Romantic intellectuals on the move in 19th-century Europe,” *Nations and Nationalism* 17/2 (2010): 257–271.

in the universities of Leipzig and Heidelberg, obtained his doctoral degree in Leipzig, and lived in Bistritz with his wife from 1873 onwards, he came to be viewed as an outsider by influential Saxon cultural circles. Already in the 1870s–1880s he was tendentially left out of those local Saxon biography collections and encyclopaedias where his elder brother, Oskar, proved to be a constant presence. But the fierce debates with prominent figures of the Hungarian literary field pushed him outside the Hungarian literary scholarship, too; for instance, his intransigent position that advocated the complete, unabridged and uncensored edition of Sándor Petőfi, containing also his revolutionary and radical republican poems, estranged him from Pál Gyulai, to whom he partly owed his university position. Or, the recently discovered university minutes of the meetings at the Faculty of Letters and the Rector's Office of his university often reveal his entangled and complex relationship with the local Hungarian social and scholarly networks. These pushed him to the borders of Hungarian literary scholarship already at the second half of the 1870s, even though his research and especially his disciples indirectly shaped major research areas in Hungarian literary history, particularly the critical philology of Sándor Petőfi's oeuvre. This interplay of inclusions and exclusions make his identifications and cultural identity choices much more complex than ethnic and cultural assimilation or clear-cut ethnic terms, like Hungarian or German, would be able to accurately reproduce. But the same in-betweenness could partly explain also his later, conscious identity politics that definitely played its part in building a similar in-between or hybrid position of the literary studies he believed in. There is much eloquent evidence that makes these traits visible; from his scholarly, public and intimate language choice to his public identity profile. Even though he wrote many pieces of scholarly research and journalism in Hungarian, the research tends to focus mainly on his German texts, losing sight of his many Hungarian or mixed-language papers, editorial comments and marginalia also from the ACLU. But a similar cultural brokerage is to be noticed not only in his public, but also private or semi-private use of languages. A deeper sociolinguistical analysis of the limited sources that reveal his private life show a clear dominance of German language after he retreats to Bistritz in the 1870s, choosing to commute for his university affairs on a weekly basis. But this German is clearly not a "national" linguistic ideal, but a much more flexible glocal one, as he uses the Saxon dialect incorporating many elements from the local, Bistritz region. This overrating of the local / regional linguistic variants goes hand in hand with the linguistic revolution Meltzl suggested in the ACLU when he arbitrarily transformed the German language by changing the capital letters of the nouns and by introducing regional linguistic variants into the discourse of the scholarship and the *belles-lettres*. Moreover, in the same private sphere of his family, language itself seems to have become a theme of common family discussions and reflections; his wife had a good knowledge of Romanian and Ruthenian, and contributed to the ACLU with the translation of several folklore texts that make use of the local, dialectal variants of these languages. This revaluation and ceaseless reflection on the nature of the linguistic norm, the language shifts, the contacts, the transactions and interactions of languages and language variants reveals a theoretical and practical perspective where the everyday hybridity of language, the multiple uses of languages, language contact and change were seen as productive and inspiring personal and scholarly environments.

From this angle the twofold way Meltzl himself used his name adds signification to the gesture; basically he either referred to himself as Hugo von Meltzl (von Lomnitz) or as (lomnitz) Meltzl Hugo / Meltzl Hugó. From a hidden ethnicizing perspective, usually only one of the names was singled out, and he either seemed to be a “German” or a “Hungarian”, depending on the ethnic and scholarly biases and contexts. The right time has come now to rehabilitate the original twofold name usage of Meltzl as the true and expressive sign of his hybrid cultural identity and his inclination towards cultural brokerage; therefore I suggest Hugo von Meltzl / Meltzl Hugó should be employed whenever one wishes to underline the complex, consciously hybrid cultural identity of the founder of the ACLU.

2. Hybrid ethnicities, multiple literary worlds: a peculiar cluster of collaborators of the ACLU

Meltzl was not the only hybrid figure and the sole scholar to favour hybrid literary and cultural situations around the first international journal of comparative literary studies. There is an outstanding cluster of collaborators of the ACLU that are both bicultural and attracted to similar literary, cultural phenomena and texts. Their “cultural multiglossia” was shadowed both by an exaggerative emphasis on the founders, especially on Meltzl, and by a methodological nationalism that made them representatives of a sole language, literature and culture, instead of revealing the hybrid character of their identity and texts that appealed to Brassai and Meltzl, respectively the similar character of the ACLU that attracted them, too.

Part of this cluster is clearly a strong network attached to and rising from the university work of Brassai and especially Meltzl, consisting of disciples and students, put in contact with the ACLU from their early studenthood. The other part of this cluster is made up by a loose network of scholars, translators, writers with various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and diverse reasons for being attracted by the linguistic, literary and cultural border situations of the ACLU. In what follows, I will single out a few important scholarly figures from both types of groups of this cluster to bring to the foreground the phenomenon itself.

The fact that Brassai and Meltzl elaborated their views on comparative literature in a university environment, and the ACLU was started partly as a university scholarly project, was relegated into the background partly because Brassai and Meltzl were seen as excentric scholars who played a lone hand, and partly because their disciples were too diverse and found their ways into many modern disciplines. Thus they became almost unrecognisable as a group, as a cluster of disciples and fellow scholars who took their own course driven also by their former university collaboration with the founders of the ACLU. Even if they slowly but surely had disappeared as a group, in the first years of the ACLU there were clear signs that the founders imagined their review and method as the expression of a certain local paradigm and sometimes spoke as the representatives of an informal group. A printed leaflet of the ACLU seeking potential Hungarian collaborators even spoke about a “Kolozsvar (scholarly) school” in 1880: “One of the main goals of our polyglot specialized journal [...] is to become a place of *rendez-vous* between the Kolozsvar School or similarly high-class scholarly domestic institutions, circles, and the representatives of the *par excellence* literary field (i.e. philosophy, poetry, literary history, aesthetics, and even ethnology) of the foreign lands. [...] By the way,

our journal has a passion for a certain literary form of hospitality that is more accepted theoretically than in practice.”³ Here, the multilingualism and hybridity of the journal already have a brand and coined terms like “hospitality” and “place of *rendez-vous*”, organized around what the founders of the ACLU call “Kolozsvár School”. Certainly, the name was a clear overstatement if we look at the Hungarian reception of the review, but the question still remains: why and how did such a term occur in the discourse of Brassai and Meltzl, and what did the proposed label signify? If we think of the cluster of collaborators recruited by Brassai and Meltzl from among their students and fellow professors from the Faculty of Letters of the local university in the 1870s and early 1880s, the term acquires more well-defined outlines, its contours are becoming more and more visible.

Few students of the local university were as visible in the scholarly life from their early university years as Heinrich von Włislocki / Włislocki Henrik. The taciturn, shy student of German studies was disposed to retire into himself, but he intrigued Meltzl with his comments on German and world literary issues. Therefore it is no wonder that he was one of the few permanent students Meltzl had in his German and comparative literary classes at the end of the 1870s. His interest in languages seems to have been legendary at his former university as testified by a later reference. In 1884, years after Włislocki’s graduation, when Szilasi Gergely / Grigoriu Silași, professor of Romanian, became involved into the largest ethnic conflict of the University of Kolozsvár, it was Włislocki he referred to as one of his best non-Romanian students who could bear witness to his fair and incorruptible university work⁴. In January 1879, Włislocki was invited by the founders of the ACLU to publish an almost year-long series of his collection of unedited Roma ballads from the environs of Kolozsvár (*Volkslieder der transsilvanischer zigenauer. Kolozsvár dialekt. Inedita*), probably as a follow-up of the intensive discussions with Meltzl on the role and possibilities of collecting and editing Romani folklore. Meltzl already had published a collection of Transylvanian Hungarian Romani folklore entitled *Jile Romane* both in the ACLU and in its twin series, the so-called *Fontes*. This latter version contains not only a spectacular and rare description of the early fieldwork among the Romani communities, but also a telltale grateful comment to Włislocki that reveals the collaborative collegial work of the young professor and his student: “Es hat einige Mühe und einen förmlichen Feldzug von mehreren Ferienmonaten gekostet, bevor auch nur eine kleine Collection Zigeunerlieder sich zusammenbringen liess, teils aus Siebenbürgen, teils aus dem Banat im Lugoser Honvédbarakenlager (“hinterwärts von Temesvár”). ‘Wir singen nur wenn wir betrunken sind.’- meinte ein alter zigeuner, der die Existenz von Volksliedern rundweg leugnete. Aber die braunen Gesellen, deren zauberischer Geige wir so viele schöne Stunden verdanken, haben es wohl verdient, dass wir uns um die Volksliederlitteratur ihrer klangvollen Sprache bemühen – einer der schönsten Europas. Die hier mitgeteilten Lieder sind

³ National Széchenyi Library, Budapest, Special Collections, Analekta, The Documents of Meltzl Hugó

⁴ Levente T. Szabó and Márta Zabán, eds., *Dokumentumok a kolozsvári Bölcsészeti, Nyelvi- és Történettudományi Kar történetéhez (1872–1892)* (Documents for the history of the Faculty of Letters, Linguistics and History of the University of Cluj) (Kolozsvár / Cluj-Napoca: Kolozsvári Egyetemi Kiadó, 2012), 222.

ausschliesslich transilvanische u. Zwar aus dem Nordosten des Landes. Die Orthographie entspricht der H. Brocjhaus'schen Transcriptionsmethode des Sanskrit, ohne dass jedoch der Herausgeber, den diesmal lediglich nur litterarhistorische Zwecke leiten, die etymolog. Konsequenzen zu berücksichtigen die Absicht hätte. Die Verdeutschungen dreier Nrr. (IV., V., IX.) rühren von einem Zuhörer seines Collegs über übersetzungskunst her: H. Von Wlislodzi [!]⁵ It was a sign of the constant appreciation of the prominent student's worthiness and the intensive discussions that, in the June 1879 issue of the ACLU, Meltzl already referred to Wlislodzi's own folklore collecting endeavours and expertise in the second part of his own English-language treatise focusing on an unknown Roma ballad, the so-called Black Wodas, collected from Bistritz / Beszterce: "I learnt afterwards from one of my hearers [i.e. students – T. Sz. L.], Mr. H von Wlislodzi, that this ballad is also common among the gypsies in Kolozsvár. (The above-mentioned Gypsy woman was a habitant of Bistritz.) The above-named gentleman had the kindness to communicate the following variation in the dialect of Kolozsvár."⁶ A few issues later, in September, the ACLU began publishing the award-winning dissertation of Wlislodzi, focusing on one of Meltzl's favourite comparative literary research topics, discussed in many of his classes: the Edda, and old Norse mythology in general. *A hapaxlegomena at Atlamálban* (Hapax legomena in the Atlamal / The Greenlandic Lay of Atli) was dedicated to linguistic and literary puzzles of a famous part of the Poetic Edda and reflected both the extraordinary effort and gift of Wlislodzi in improving his language abilities, including historical linguistics, and the attraction of Meltzl to Nordic languages, mythologies and literatures. In 1880 the ACLU even republished the paper that won the award for the best paper in literary studies at the University of Kolozsvár in the preceding year: after slight changes it appeared in the *Fontes* series in a significantly wider circulation compared to the earlier leaflets.⁷ And it was similarly out of Meltzl's respect for his student, that in 1880 he was in conflict with almost all of his colleagues for Wlislodzi; though he majored in German and took his secondary specialization in classical studies, he made a request to take his doctorate examination in German philology as a major specialization, and German literature, respectively classical studies as minor academic fields.⁸ Although all of Meltzl's colleagues refused such a division of German literary and linguistic studies, it is noteworthy that Meltzl supported the initiative for acknowledging a higher degree of specialization, an initiative that stood already at the basis of

⁵ H. Meltzl, *Jile Romane. Volkslieder der transylvanisch-ungarischen Zigeuner. Originaltexte mit gegenüber stehenden verdeutschungen. Proben einer grösseren Sammlung Inedita*. Sonder-Abdruck aus dem Brassai-Meltzl-schen Összehasonl. Irodalomtörténelmi Lapok (Zeitschr. f. vergl. Litt.) Vol. I. [1877], Vol. II [1878] Meltzl 1879, 18.

⁶ Hugo von Meltzl, *The Black Wodas. An Inedited Gipsy Ballad. Original Text with Translation*, ACLU June 1879, 1091–1095.

⁷ According to the original copy of the printer's specimen, it was published in 160 copies – in comparison with the usual 30–120 copies of the *Fontes* volumes – in March 1880, even though the title page displays 1879.

⁸ Levente T. Szabó and Márta Zabán, eds., *Dokumentumok a kolozsvári Bölcsészeti-, Nyelv- és Történettudományi Kar történetéhez*, 158–166.

the emergence of ACLU as a novel and specialized form of literary studies a few years earlier. And in the same year it was similarly Meltzl whose connections with Leipzig and especially with the publishing house of *Magazin für die Literatur des Auslandes* were essential in publishing the collected Roma folklore of Włislocki,⁹ and launching his career as a more and more internationally known scholar of Romani studies, and the writer of several well-known foundational monographs and collections in the field of ethnography and ethnology (Włislocki). In the afterword to *Heideblüten* he spoke about the method of Meltzl he was following in editing his own collection; and even though the distance grew between them in the 1880s, for instance, the stylistic and literary analysis of the later highly debated figure and poetry of Giňa Ranjičić, the Serbian Romani poet that Włislocki presented in his successful and memorable *Aus dem inneren Leben der Zigeuner*¹⁰ reminded emphatically of the relationship Brassai, Meltzl and the ACLU envisioned between folklore and comparative literary studies.¹¹ Even though Włislocki has lately become very contested in the scholarly field that he himself had helped to emerge¹² and the publishing of his correspondence with Anton Herrmann / Herrmann Antal helped to dismiss many mythologies around him and his fieldwork, his merits in the shaping of modern ethnology, ethnography and ethnicity studies are clearly visible.¹³ It is more rarely acknowledged that the ACLU had such a foundational role in shaping his idea of the fieldwork and the early vision of comparative literature, as foregrounded by the ACLU, in preserving and reviving “endangered languages and literatures” and literary cultures without a nation / state. But what is more striking is the intimate relationship between his constant anthropological interest in comparing various ethnic cultures, languages and literatures from Armenian to Hungarian, and from Romanian to Romani, and his own complex identity patterns. The scholar with Polish origins who sometimes even preserved the original spelling of his name (he returned to the Polish Włislocki on the title page of *Heideblüten*), but who used a Hungarian version of his name, wrote faultlessly in Hungarian in his early publications, and created a complete mythology around his anthropological fieldtrips and his immersion into Romani communities, was clearly ceaselessly negotiating his ethnic identity. His management and self-fashioning of his multiple and hybrid identities made him especially responsive to the alluring vision of literary and cultural hybridity ACLU was foregrounding in the form of comparative literature partly through another hybrid scholar and university professor, Hugo von Meltzl / Meltzl Hugó.

⁹ It was the same publisher that had just put into circulation the translation, edition and critical comments of Meltzl on Petőfi’s philosophical epic poem, *Az őriült* (Petőfi 1879).

¹⁰ Dr. Heinrich von Włislocki, *Aus dem inneren Leben der Zigeuner*, Ethnologische Mitteilungen (Berlin: Verlag von Emil Felber, 1892)

¹¹ Both eloquently and ironically, Włislocki dedicated the book to Max Koch, the founder of the *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Literaturgeschichte*, the comparative literary review that built upon the idea of the ACLU, and the publishing of which partly made Meltzl discontinue the editing of ACLU. (Włislocki 1892, II.)

¹² Wim Willems, *In Search of the True Gypsy: from Enlightenment to Final Solution* (Routledge, 2014) 183 ff.

¹³ Heinrich von Włislocki, *Zur Ethnographie der Zigeuner in Südosteuropa: Tsiganologische Aufsätze und Briefe aus dem Zeitraum 1880–1905* (Peter Lang, 1994).

Herrmann Antal / Anton Herrmann should raise similar suspicion as Włislocki did, though his nexus to Kolozsvár and the circle of Meltzl and Brassai is still more invisible than in the case of his friend and fellow-author. He came from the same community and generation as Włislocki did: from Kronstadt / Brassó / Braşov, and similarly shifted between Hungarian and German cultural environments like Włislocki, even though his being a Catholic already influenced his educational choices; he changed his Kronstadt high-school to a Kolozsvár-based one, then switched several times among Vienna, Kolozsvár and Budapest for his university studies. His Kolozsvár university years are usually dated from 1872 to 1873, but recently discovered archival materials and more well-known printed sources show a more substantial and lengthier relationship with the circle of Meltzl and Brassai, although his absence from the ACLU is still to be accounted for. In December 1874 it was partly Meltzl who supported the uncommon request of Herrmann, still a student of the Faculty of Letters, to teach practical classes of German. Of course, the Faculty declined his request, but this was most probably due to the ambiguous university status of Herrmann than to any other reasons.¹⁴ Being one of the very first students of Meltzl, Herrmann seems to have been supported by him even later on; the 1875 essay competition of the university was clearly modelled on the work of Herrmann. Meltzl was more than happy to advocate his “graduated third-year student”’s excellent work on the reception of Martin Opitz in Transylvania.¹⁵ Of course, this piece of early comparativism, the doctoral thesis prefiguring the brand of the ACLU, was the first scholarly publication of Herrmann.¹⁶ Its remarks and acknowledgements reveal a close co-operation with Meltzl: “The sources needed for this study are hardly accessible; I even had to renounce some of them. The libraries and archives have too little to offer, the one-time contemporaries hardly speak of my topic. Besides my own resources I used the library and notes of Professor Meltzl and the library of Professor Heinrich. My heartfelt thanks go to both of them!”¹⁷ At the moment of publication Herrmann was already full professor of Hungarian of the gymnasium of Pancsova / Панчево / Pančevo / Panticzowa / Banstadt / Panciova, and he was to publish his next book, a similarly comparative literary endeavour¹⁸ in the similarly multilingual and hybrid border-community of Fehértemplom/ Бела Црква / Weißkirchen / Biserica Albă (today in Serbia) populated by Serbs, Hungarians, Czechs, Romanians, Romani, Germans and Croatians. The scholar, himself well-versed in German, Hungarian, Romanian, Croatian, French, Italian, Spanish and Romani, brought to the forefront one of the favourite topics of Meltzl and a recurrent scholarly problem also in the ACLU; the oeuvre and reshaping of Lessing’s *Nathan der Weise* in a local, Hungarian reception, and consequently the changing, multiple identity of

¹⁴ Levente T. Szabó and Márta Zabán, eds., *Dokumentumok a kolozsvári Bölcsészeti, Nyelv- és Történettudományi Kar történetéhez*, 68–69.

¹⁵ Ibid., 87.

¹⁶ Antal Herrmann, *Opitz Márton Erdélyben 1622–1623* (Martin Opitz in Transylvania, 1622–1623) (Budapest, 1876).

¹⁷ Antal Herrmann, *Opitz Márton Erdélyben*, 13.

¹⁸ Herrmann Antal, *Lessing Nathanja Magyarországon* (Lessing’s Nathan in Hungary) (Fehértemplom/ Бела Црква, 1883).

the literary works in various cultural environments. Personal cultural brokerage, the hybridization of identity, the deep experience of border cultural situations, and the attraction to the multiplicity and hybridity of the literary and cultural phenomena are intertwined at Herrmann who apparently abandons this comparative literary perspective that recalls both philologically and conceptually the ACLU. But this abandonment is only a semblance, the common ventures of Herrmann and Włislocki from the 1880s focusing on multilingual folklore, and especially on Romani folklore, underline the fact that this is basically a continuation of a vision of comparative literature englobing the folklore they encountered in Kolozsvár also around the ACLU – of course, with several new and different emphases. In 1887, when Herrmann started the first Hungarian ethnographical and ethnological periodical, he surprised many local scholars by making it bilingual; the *Ethnologische Mitteilungen aus Ungarn* had the highly significant subtitle *Zeitschrift für die Volkskunde der Bewohner Ungarns und seiner Nebenländer* that asked for a widening perspective of national ethnographies, including the Hungarian one, to focus on the contacts and entangled nature of folklore texts, instead of imagining them in an ethnically pure state. The Hungarian version of the pathbreaking review, the *Ethnologiai Közlemények* (*Ethnological Proceedings*) consciously employed the neologism “ethnology” instead of the already customary “ethnography” partly to emphasize the novel vision on the role of comparison among different folklore environments and the working of folklore in multilingual contexts. The scholar later returned to the University of Kolozsvár, was appointed as the first Hungarian ethnographer and “comparative ethnologist” professor in historical Hungary, and held one of the first modern university chairs in ethnography and ethnology in Europe. He made clear the goals of his “comparative ethnology” and these aims recalled many of the passages around the ACLU: “If only those people whose interests are bound up should understand one another. Instead of the ruthless exploitation of the daily political situations, a correct intuition of the ethnic relationships and joint interest could assure a safe perspective of the future, and would secure an existence striving after education and freedom.”¹⁹ Herrmann was not only an active bilingual, but also used and conceptualized this potential in a similar way that Brassai and Meltzl imagined multilingualism and cultural border-crossing; he spoke up to a global community of emerging ethnologists and anthropologists with the goal of shaping a global discourse on local problems, with the lure and methodologically conscious view of the *global*. In the heydays of scholarly nationalisms and the nationalization of the emerging human sciences he used his hybrid personal and professional experiences as a valuable scholarly asset that allowed him to conceive a reflexive scholarship.

Of course, this scholarship, similarly to Włislocki’s case, has many individual elements that make it different from the ACLU. But the career stories of these scholars make visible not only the lively and entangled disciplinary afterlives of the ACLU, but are also able to reveal the animated, complex and similarly entangled clusters and networks around the ACLU and its university backgrounds. And certainly, one of the key points of attraction of the ACLU seems to

¹⁹ Herrmann Antal, *Alternatívák a rumén ethnológiához* (Alternatives for a Ruthenian ethnology) (Budapest, 1890), 14.

have been its openness towards hybridity that offered both personal identity solutions and scholarly prospects for some of the multilingual students, university faculty, scholars, writers, translators that were trapped in the nationalizing policies of the various ethnic communities in Hungary (and even beyond). These were not necessarily cosmopolitan figures. For instance, Gregoriu Silași / Szilasi Gergely could hardly be regarded a cosmopolitan scholar, though his hybridity and biculturality is evident. The first professor of Romanian studies at the University of Kolozsvár was a Greek-Catholic priest, educated in Kolozsvár, Vienna and Blaj / Balázsfalva who advocated the rights of his own Romanian community, while many of his works and gestures show a true endeavour for the promotion of mutual understanding and knowledge of Romanian and Hungarian culture. For instance, his *Apologie. Discursuri filologice și istorice maghiare privitoare la români* (Apology. Hungarian philological and historical discussions on the Romanians)²⁰ show him as a mediator and cultural broker of ethnic cultures whose relationship is presented neither as a dystopian tenseness, nor as a utopian harmony, but as an entangled interdependence that is to be understood and deciphered with an anthropological understanding by cultural mediators. Such a position must have been sympathetic also to the editors of the ACLU, and it was probably not mere collegial courtesy, but also a deeper respect and intellectual curiosity that made them invite him to become a collaborator of the ACLU. He was a more or less recurrent presence in the review, translating a poem of Petőfi into Romanian for the polyglot collection of the ACLU already in the first volume. In 1881 Meltzl invited him to translate Schiller's epigram on Kant and Shopenhauer's text on Kant's death, but it was also him who translated Goethe's *Gleich und gleich* into Romanian for the multilingual collection of translations with which the ACLU paid its respects to Goethe on the half-century commemoration of his death. But by far the most intriguing publication of Silași / Szilasi in the ACLU was produced at the end of 1886. It is not necessarily the valuable dissemination of *Iliana Kosintsana* (today: Ileana Cosânzeana) that is to be remarked, but the date of the publication in Romanian. The December 1886 article occurs more than two years after the first and harshest ethnic conflict and debate of the university on the alleged role Silași / Szilasi and his students might have had in commemorating the 1848 assembly of Blaj. The ethnic tensions stirred by rival ethnic political groups, the activity of the Iulia Association of Romanian students of Kolozsvár, and the preparations for the commemorations made some Hungarian students boycott the lectures of Silași / Szilasi and demonstrate against him in a showy and unaccustomed manner.²¹ Even though the inner university and the ministerial investigation found no substantial evidence of his "seditious acts against the Hungarian state," the professor, who was also Dean of the Faculty of Letters at the outbreak of the scandal, was forced to take early retirement in 1886. It seemed a silent, symbolic protest of the ACLU that Meltzl asked for the publication of the text of the humiliated professor and his former colleague, and also a gesture towards the minister of state who hastened the appointment of a

²⁰ Gregoriu Silași, *Discusiuni filologice și istorice maghiare privitoare la Români*, (Hungarian philological and historical discussions on the Romanians) (Clusiu [Cluj]: Impr. J. Stein, 1879).

²¹ Levente T. Szabó and Márta Zabán, eds., *Dokumentumok a kolozsvári Bölcsészeti, Nyelv- és Történettudományi Kar történetéhez*, 220–230.

new professor of Romanian, the similarly bicultural Moldován Gergely, but a figure more loyal towards the ethno-nationalist Hungarian state. The gesture of the ACLU was also a belated sign, an *a posteriori* reflection of the existence of a loose local circle or network made up also of hybrid and bicultural scholars, colleagues or students of Brassai and Meltzl at the University of Kolozsvár / Klausenburg / Cluj.

But it was not only locals with complex ethnic and cultural identity that were attracted by the hybridity of the comparative literature and multilingualism in the manner envisioned by the ACLU. Ludwig Adolf Staufe-Simiginowicz, the Suceava-born scholar, was clearly one of them. Having a Ukrainian mother and a German father, he completed his early studies in the multilingual and multicultural Czernowitz / Cernăuți / Чернівці / טשערנאָוויץ, traditionally the capital town of Bukowina. Meltzl and Simiginowicz met personally when the young professor was sent as a member of a delegation of his own university for pooling of scholarly experience to the similarly newly founded university of Czernowitz that finally came to bear the name of the emperor similarly to the university of Brassai and Meltzl. In contrast to Meltzl, Simiginowicz had already had a substantial experience in gathering and editing literary and folklore texts during his years in Vienna and Kronstadt / Braşov / Brassó. By then he had already edited an unprecedented collection of translation of contemporary Romanian poets,²² but also several outstanding folklore collections and treatises, especially on Romanian folklore²³ It is no wonder that he became collaborator of the ACLU from the beginnings of the review; he was included into the permanent collaborators from the fourth issue of the journal, in February 1877, and remained there till the last issue of the ACLU, eleven years later.

Around the turn of the 1880s, his work betrays a novel, increasing emphasis also on the folklore and culture of other ethnic groups, including the Ukrainians and the Romani communities of Bukowina. The turning point seems to be exactly the ACLU where Simiginowicz publishes a series of Ukrainian ("kleinrussisch") folk songs in 1878-1879, before collecting them into a much larger edition.²⁴ And it is in the beginning of the 1880s, after the first wave of highly influential publications and collections of Meltzl in the ACLU and the *Fontes* series on Romani culture and "literature" when Simiginowicz himself starts focusing also on these groups in Bukowina after several decades of having published on other ethnic cultures, especially on the Romanians. It seems that his contact with the ACLU shaped the perspective

²² Ludwig Adolf Simiginowicz-Staufe, *Romanischen Poeten. In ihren originalen Formen und metrisch übersetzt*, (Vienna, 1865). In 1878 this was termed as "his best and most useful book, since it makes us encounter a little known and appretiated literature" by the editors of the *Biographisches Lexikon des Kaisertums Österreich*: 37. Teil: Stadion-Stegmayer, Wien: Druck und Verlag der k. k. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1878, 273.

²³ Ludwig Adolf Staufe-Simiginowicz, *Romanische Märchen aus der Bukowina*, Die Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde (Band I., 1853) 42–50., 469–472.; Ludwig Adolf Staufe-Simiginowicz, *Romanische Märchen aus der Bukowina*, Die Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie und Sittenkunde (Band II., 1855) 197–212, 389–400.; Ludwig Adolf Simiginowicz-Staufe, *Der Klosterbau zu Argesch. Erzählung aus dem romanischen Volksleben* (Kronstadt / Braşov, 1870).

²⁴ Ludwig Adolf Simiginowicz-Staufe, *Kleinrussische Volkslieder* (Leipzig, 1888).

of Simiginowicz as well as he shaped the outlook of the ACLU in matters of cultural contact zones and forms of hybridity in Bukowina.

These figures constitute only a sample of what may be termed culturally and ethnically complex figures around the ACLU with a potential and openness towards hybridity. But there are many more of them from Podhorszky Ludwig / Lajos and Frédéric Mistral to Paul Mayet and Tschen Ki-dong / Tschen Kitong. Usually their most visible mark is the multiple use or spelling of their names or their functional multilingualism. The nationalizing ethnic cultures of the 19th century kept them hidden for a long time,, and even though their work often comes close or surpasses that of their counterparts from the national literary canons, their oeuvre is often trapped between different national cultures. Their presence in the ACLU makes both the origins and the consequences, the conceptual force and potential of cultural border situations in the ACLU even more visible, and brands the ACLU and its comparative literary vision also *vis-à-vis* hybrid cultural identities. It seems that there was a mutually dependant relationship between clusters of cultural brokers, scholars, writers and translators with complex ethnic and cultural identifications, and the literary hybridity potential of the ACLU. From the perspective of their multiple and fluctuating hybrid identities these figures found an answer to their identity issues in the *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum* that proactively insisted on the interdependence and intensive contact of cultures, rather than pushing for their alleged national or ethnic “purities”. But in its turn, the ACLU not only attracted them, but they themselves sustained and made the hybridity of the ACLU survive for more than a decade; by their presence they suggested that such a vision on the literary and cultural field was a possible, modern, valid and valuable perspective.

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